

A Dialogue between the Arch-Bis of C. and the Bishop of Heref. Containing the true Reasons why the Bishops could not read the Declaration.

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Cant.

MY Lord, I am glad to see you, but I must deal plainly with you (as *Paul* did with *Peter*) and Rebuke you to your face, for your late Schismatical carriage.

Hereford. Your Grace startles me!

Cant. Nay, my Lord, you have startled me, and the rest of my True-blue Brethren more, by your unexpected Separation from our blessed Community. For when we entred into an holy Consultation against the Lords Anointed, saying, *Come, Let us break his Royal Command, and cast the cords of all Obligations to Obedience from us.* You proved a Dissenter in this matter, and published your Reasons too for not bravely Disobeying as we did. Whereby you have much damaged us; We look for some satisfaction as to this great and weighty Point.

Heref. May it please your Grace, I am very sorry if I have given you any just cause of Offence, which yet I am not Conscions of. I have done nothing but what was my Duty, as a Christian in general, and as a Member of the Church of England in especial, from whom I have been taught to obey my Prince in all things that thwart not any declared Law of God; which no body of any sense can say, the Reading his Majesty's Declaration does; therefore I was bound to an exact Compliance, or else I could not have approved my self a True Son of the Church.

Cant. My Lord, 'Tis a sign you have been long in the Country, you are so much a Stranger to our Intreagues here. We know, Reading the Declaration is in it self an harmless thing, and the King ought to have been obeyed in it; but our Circumstances were so extraordinary, that we were forced to borrow a point of Obedience, and we promise the King (if He will take our Words) to pay him double at another time when we have more heart to it. As for instance, If his Majesty did (Oh! that he would) forbear us, and have patience with us, till he Commanded us to enquire into our several Parishes what Dissenters were Inhabiting or Lodging there, and return their Names, that they might be forthwith Prosecuted against; He should see what amends we would make him for the little Slip now, in our hearty and affectionate Obeying such a for ever precious Order. We would make

our Sullen Tongue-ry'd Priests open wide their Jaws, and cry aloud in the Publick Assemblies: *Where the Word of a King is, there is Power, and who may say unto him, What doest Thou?* But to return, My Lord, to speak inter nos; Our Controverie with you, is not for obeying the Kings Command, but for not Joyning with us. We are laying our Heads together, and making use of all the Wit and Policy we have, and truly are bound to take up a little K. too upon Interest of some not far from us, (who have enough to spare) to support the Grandeur of our declining Church. And we verily thought we should have had your aid and assistance in this great Work. But you have finely given us the lurch. Well, 'tis no matter, I hope with what strength we have (which I assure you is not small) we shall do the thing without you. You heard how well we came off the other day.

Heref. Yes, *May it please your Grace*, and I heard how Piously you came on. For before your appearing at the Council Board, *your Grace*, and the other Reverend Bishops, went to Prayer. Now I have exactly read all the Prayers in our Rubrick, and cannot find one Prayer proper to your Graces Condition at that juncture of time. And I know 'tis not your Graces Principle to use any other Prayer.

Cant. *My Lord*, I am sorry you are so short-fighted; I tell you there is a Prayer very pertinent to all our Conditions, which we made use of, and found great comfort and refreshment in.

Heref. Will your Grace vouchsafe to acquaint me with it, for I cannot imagine what Prayer it should be.

Cant. *My Lord*, 'Tis in the beginning of the *Liturgy*, and it seems to be Proprietary penn'd for our very Case at that time: It runs in the language of *Confession*, which best suited with us then. For though we would not acknowledge our Crime to *Man*, yet we confess'd our state to *God* (according to the truth of it) in the following Words: *We have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep, We have followed too much the Devices and Desires of our own hearts; We have done those things which we ought not to have done, and we left undone those things which we ought to have done,* (especially the obeying our Sovereign Just and most Righteous Com-

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mand) And there is no health in us, and so the Lord have mercy upon us. And a great deal of Mercy we have found, in being delivered from our great and sad Calamity, to the great Rejoycing of the Rabbble and all the Scum of the City; and not only so, but a prodigious Miracle has been wrought for us in the midit of our Enemies, to confirm the Truth of our Cause; Such a Miracle as former Ages never saw, and future Ages will very hardly believe.

Heref. If your Grace please, I desire to know it, I thought our Church lay'd no stress on Miracles.

Cant. I, but my L. our Church being at a very low ebb, the Pillars of it standing at the Barr, and for a Miracle to be wrought at such a time, and upon such an occasion, we should be blind indeed if we did not take notice of it.

Heref. Will your Grace tell what it was.

Cant. To the Honour of our Cause, the Glory of our Hierarchy, the truth of our Constitution be it spoken. The Lawyers Pockets (which were ever as tenacious as the Sygian Lake) could not hold our Guinea's, as soon as they had done their Work, they were compell'd by an unaccountable, and more than common Magical Impetus, (contrary to the very nature of their Souls) to return back their Wages, their Stomachs on a sudden were so squeamish they could not bear the sight of our glittering Gold.

Heref. This is strange indeed, and may pass for a Miracle, and so let it pass for me! Will your Grace be pleased to tell me the Reasons of your not Reading the Declaration. Was it really for fear of Popery getting uppermost?

Cant. No, No, My Lord, We are not so weak as to have any apprehension of that; only if we can (and there are no Endeavours wanting) gull the Mobilee into a belief that that is the great and true Reason, it may do us no diskindnes.

Heref. Then, May it please your Grace, was it because you scruple the Dispensing Power.

Cant. No indeed, My Lord, nor for that neither. We are for Dispensing Power, Exalting Power, Stretching Power, any Power, always provided it be on our side, only we thought this the plausiblest pretence for our Disobedience, because we might fly to some Journals of Parliament for Refuge from the Storm of Royal Thunder.

Heref. If I may not be too bold with your Grace, I would humbly beg you to tell me the Right Reasons, You do not know what Influence they may have upon me.

Cant. Why then, My Lord, you shall have them.

First, We were against Reading the De-

claration, because we had no hand in the making of it, nor was our Advice ever asked about it, and it is the nature of we Prelates to oppose every thing, that was not Originally hatched in our Noddles.

Secondly, Because there runs such a Vein of Mercy and Tenderness throughout the Decla, as is quite opposite to our former Practises, and present Principles. Indeed Solomon says, a Kings Throne is established by Mercy; But alas! a Bishops Throne would quickly be ruin'd by it. And tho we have often ventur'd shaking the Royal Throne by our irregular methods to preserve our selves, yet now our heart-breaking Grief is, that we have a Prince too Sagacious to commit his Sceptre into our violent hands.

Thirdly, The King has disobliged us, and we had no other way to manifest our Resentments. To your Tents, O Israel, had been too open, and exposed us to present danger; and therefore we thought it Prudence to begin with scrupling and questioning his Authority, and if we escape (as I don't much doubt it) with this, we may more confidently proceed to higher things afterwards.

Fourthly, There is a necessity of our becoming Popular (tho we heretofore so much reclaimed against it) as matters now stand with us, and there was no way to effect it like this. For upon our refusing to Read the Declaration, we could not but suppose we should be questioned for it, then twas but giving out we were suffering for the Protestant Religion, because we would not joyn with the Papists (as the Dilenter do at this day) and the giddy-headed multitude we knew well enough would soon take the Alarm and cry us up to the Skies in their Huzzas. These are the only men that stand up for the Protestant Religion, we should all be Papists if it were not for such as these. Now as we Projected we have gained the point of being the Moblies Darlings.

Fifthly, We did not Read the Declaration because our Sovereigns Sentiments and ours are to vastly differing. He is not for constraining Conscience, ay, but we are. He is for no mans suffering for Religion, but we are for every Bodies suffering that cannot come up to every Gim-crack of our Worship. And hence it is against our Natures, Consciences, as well as Interest to read Liberty to those People whom we would always have kept in bondage unto us.

Heref. May it please your Grace, if these be (as I believe they are) the real reasons of your disobeying his Majesty's Command, as to the Reading His most Gracious Declaration, I must beg your pardon to remain in the choice I have made, A true Son of the Church of England, and an obedient Subject to the King my Master.